Kennedy: Was there another marksman?

PETER FAIRLEY

A fresh furore over the official version of the assassination of President Kennedy broke out today, when a photostat copy of an FBI report was produced which suggests that someone may have "hushed up" some medical evidence

The photostat is in the hands of Richard Popkin, 42-years-old Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, at present on Sabbatical leave in Paris.

He told me today: "This evidence lends strong weight to the idea that there were **TWO** assassins, not one.

"There are major discrepancies between the report of two FBI men who saw the autopsy performed, and the autopsy described to the Warren Commission. I understand that the doctor who performed the autopsy has since been told by his superiors to shut up and say nothing.'

Discrepancies

He added: "There are now so many discrepancies that the Warren Commission theory that Lee Harvey Oswald killed President Kennedy on his own can no longer be held valid. Another commission should be appointed."

The photostat is of a report by FBI agents Francis X. O'Neill and James W. Sibert, who were present when the post-mortem was performed by Commander J. J. Humes, and an assistant, Commander Thornton Boswell, at Bethesda Naval Hospital, just outside Washington.

The report itself is now in the U.S. National Archives.

That bullet

Professor Popkin told me: "The FBI agents state that the doctors found that the first bullet to strike President Kennedy hit him in the back six inches below the neck and two inches to the right of the spine, and that it travelled downwards at an angle of 45 to 60 degrees and did not exit.

"The report further states that the doctors, when probing the wound, found the bullet had only gone in finger-deep."

He went on: "But the official autopsy report given to the Warren Commission talks of this bullet going in at the base of the President's neck and exiting from his throat, having travelled at an angle of only about 18 degrees.

"There are thus discrepancies between the FBI eye-witness report of the autopsy and the official report in three respects: the location of the wound, the angle at which the bullet travelled and whether it came out or not.

"Why?"

Notes burned

Professor Popkin added: "Neither of these FBI agents was called before the Warren Commission, nor was their report included among the documents published by the commission. Furthermore, the doctor who performed the autopsy has said he burned his preliminary notes of it on November 24, 1963 (two days after the post-mortem).

"Why?"

The official post-mortem report published by the Warren Commission does not mention a wound lower down in the President's back. Nor does it tell of a bullet being located "finger-deep."

It described a wound at the base of the neck, and says the bullet "made its exit" and a major wound in the head, which actually killed the President.

"Why should the FBI agents report a wound lower down the President's back if they did not see it?" asked the Professor.

"If a bullet did strike him in that manner, then, in my opinion, it could not have come from Oswald's rifle, and suggests that a second assassin fired."

Professor Popkin plans to give full details of his findings in October. His book, called The Second Oswald, will be published by the New York Review of Books.

When it comes out, it will be the third major work by independent investigators criticising the official explanation of the killing given by the Warren Commission.

Last night, millions of viewers in Britain heard lawyer Mark Lane argue the existence of a second assassin on a TV interview.

'Unconvincing'

Said Professor Popkin's wife, in Paris: "His work in philosophy is directed at uncovering influences that have been overlooked. As soon as the Warren Commission report was published, he found it unconvincing and got a complete set of the hearings from the local library.

"He has studied a lot of murder cases, and is a keen reader of detective novels. His luckiest break was to get hold of the photostat copy of the FBI agents' report."